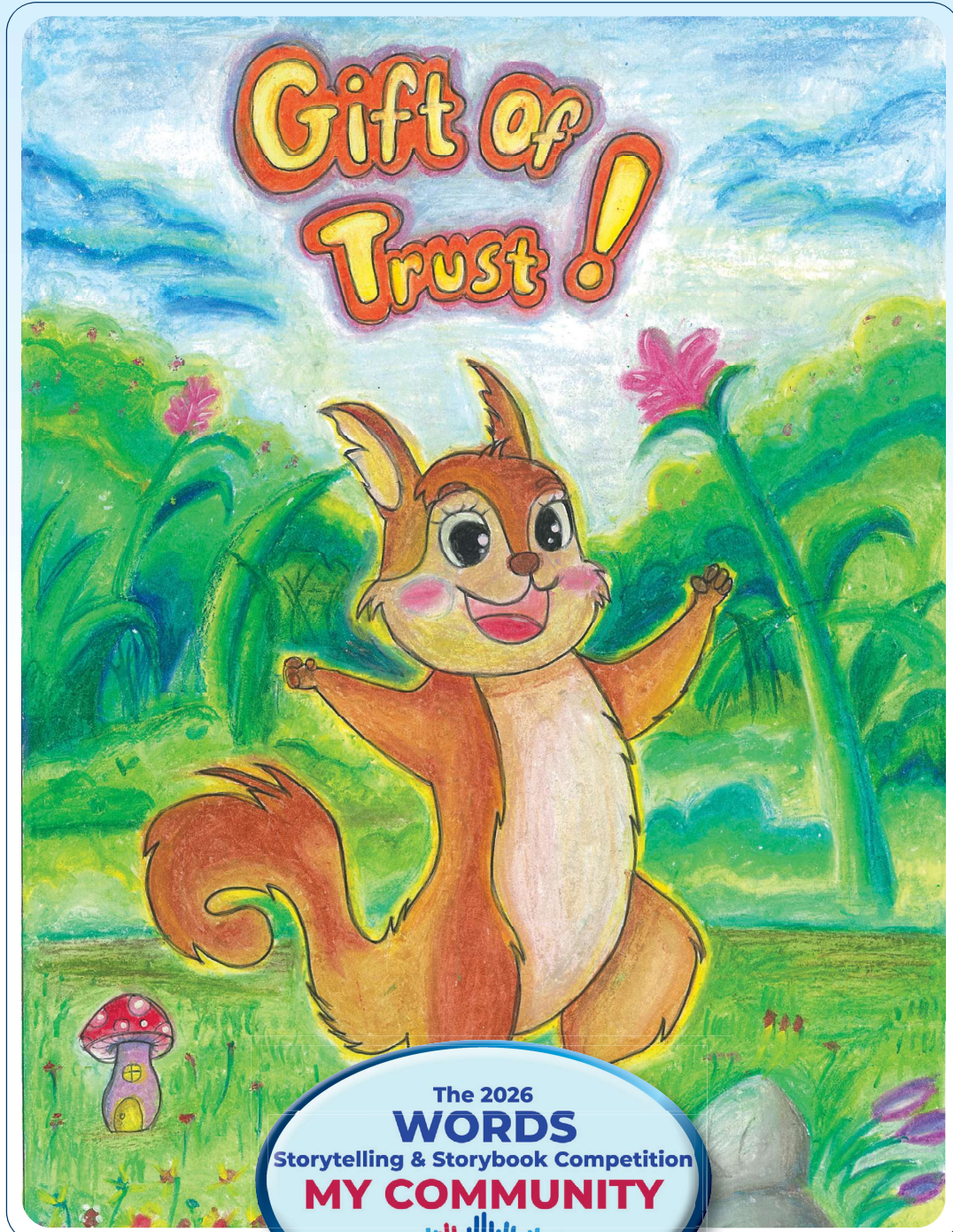
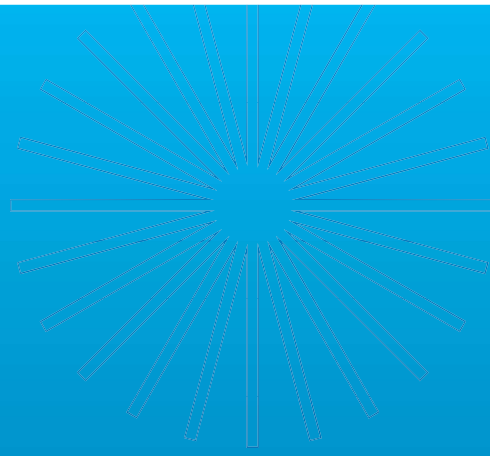


AURORA SOFIA TJINDARBUMI

- GIFT OF TRUST! -





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American Indonesian Exchange Foundation (AMINEF)
Intiland Tower, 11th Floor,
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These storybooks have been lightly edited for clarity.

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Foreword

The seventeen stories presented in this book came from a collaborative process between students and their teachers— both their home institution teacher (co-teacher) and the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) serving in their schools. At the heart of the collaborative process is the desire to foster understanding and to bridge differences. The schools where they taught were selected through a collaborative process between AMINEF, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs to host the ETAs. Indeed, everything about this program underlines cooperation between all parties involved.

After a long selection and preparation process, the ETAs served in Indonesia for eight months. They came from various states in the US, from New York to California, Vermont to Louisiana - some from urban areas, others more rural. Together, they represent the rich landscape of places and cultures in America. Likewise, in Indonesia, the ETAs were exposed to and experienced life in various places and cultures. They co-taught English in various areas, spreading from Padang, Jambi, Lampung, Kulon Progo, Kudus, Sidoarjo, Praya, Palangkaraya, Makassar, and Kendari.

Over the eight months the ETAs, co-teachers, and students, in essence, serve as cultural ambassadors to one another. They forged friendships beyond the classroom walls and invested their time and energy in the communities. And this year's theme for the WORDS Storybook competition is indeed "My Community".

The stories you are about to read here were written by the stars of each school. The authors won a local competition organized by the ETAs and the co-teachers. They then worked intensively on their books and on how to best narrate the stories. In April, the students, co-teachers, and ETAs were invited to Jakarta to celebrate their journey – from beginning to learn English to becoming authors and, subsequently, storytellers.

The students performed confidently in front of a panel of four prominent judges who are all Fulbrighters from Indonesia and the US: Ahmad Fuadi, an author of best-selling novels including "Negeri 5 Menara" and a prominent public speaker; Anna Grundström, a performing artist and independent researcher based in Brooklyn, New York; Azalia Muchransyah, filmmaker, scholar, and lecturer at BINUS University; and Douglas Ramage, AMINEF Board Member and founding Managing Director of Bower-GroupAsia Indonesia.

The third place went to Clarintha Glory Amungin Allokendek from SMK Raden Umar Said Kudus with "Hannah The One-Man Team" whose story reminded us of the importance of collaboration with others. Putri Permata Sari from SMK 9 Padang's story "The Pursuit of Happiness", won second place. It is a beautiful story about self-acceptance and creating a community of your own.

In first place was Florencia Kirana Wilman from SMK 6 Padang, with her story "The Day Coffee Called Us Home." Ms. Wilman presented a powerful reminder that, amid disasters and challenges, communities can work together and find solutions. Her story showed that sometimes what the community needs is one person to plow the way, helping each other, and others will follow.

The WORDS Competition is a celebration for all: the students, the ETAs, and the co-teachers. It is a celebration of a new, and hopefully lasting, connection among people. And AMINEF is proud to have been part of these connections.

Dr. Sandra Hamid

Executive Director, AMINEF

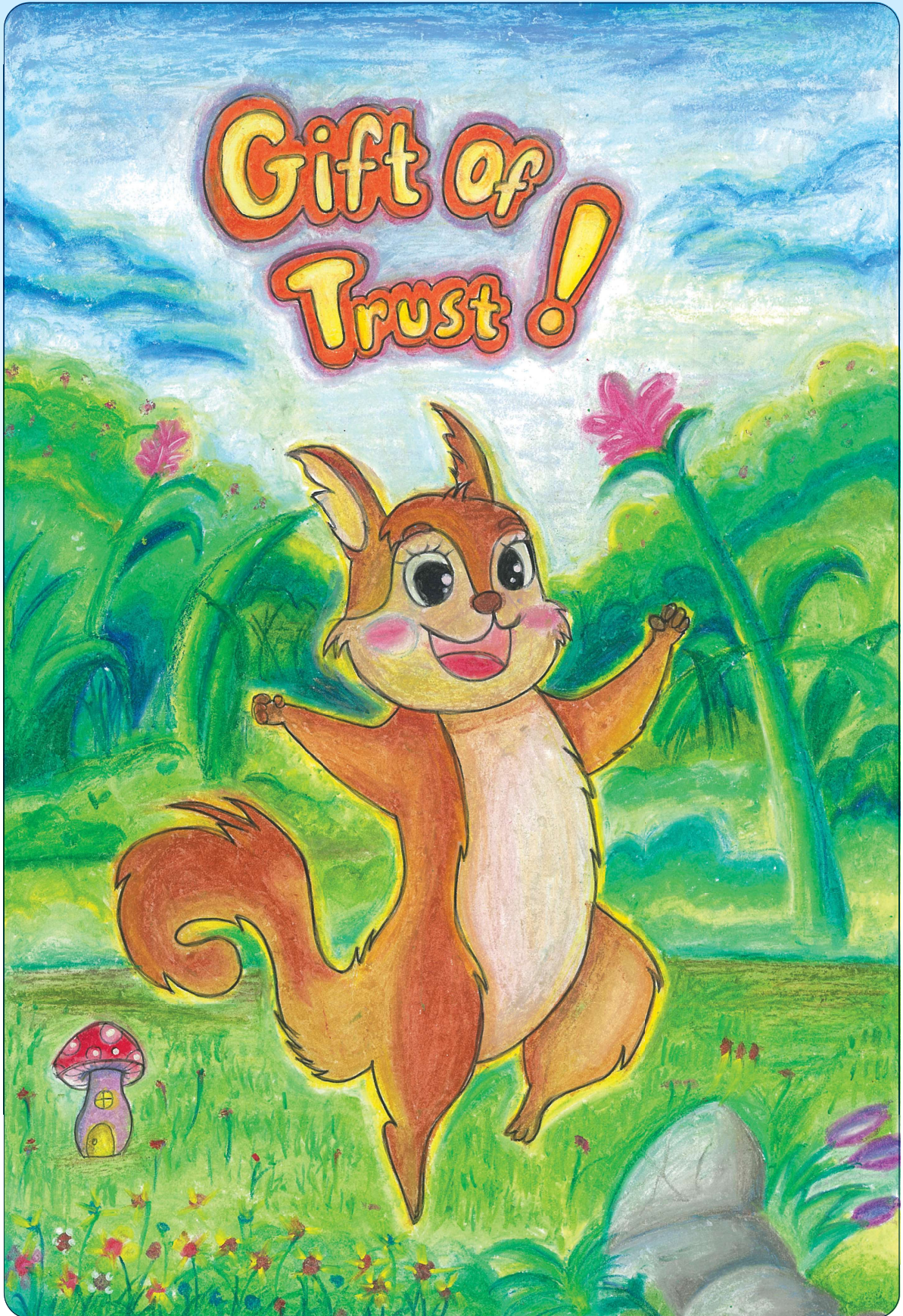
About the WORDS Competition

WORDS is a national English-language competition that brings together one student from each Fulbright ETA host school. Launched as a speech and talent contest in 2007, it evolved into a storytelling and storybook competition in 2018.

Finalists first win their school-level competition, which Fulbright ETAs organize in collaboration with the co-teachers. ETAs support students through brainstorming sessions, workshops, and performance feedback.

A highlight of the AMINEF year, the WORDS Competition allows 10th and 11th graders to showcase their storytelling skills, English proficiency, and cultural insights. In 2026, seventeen finalists will bring the theme **“My Community”** to life through their original stories.





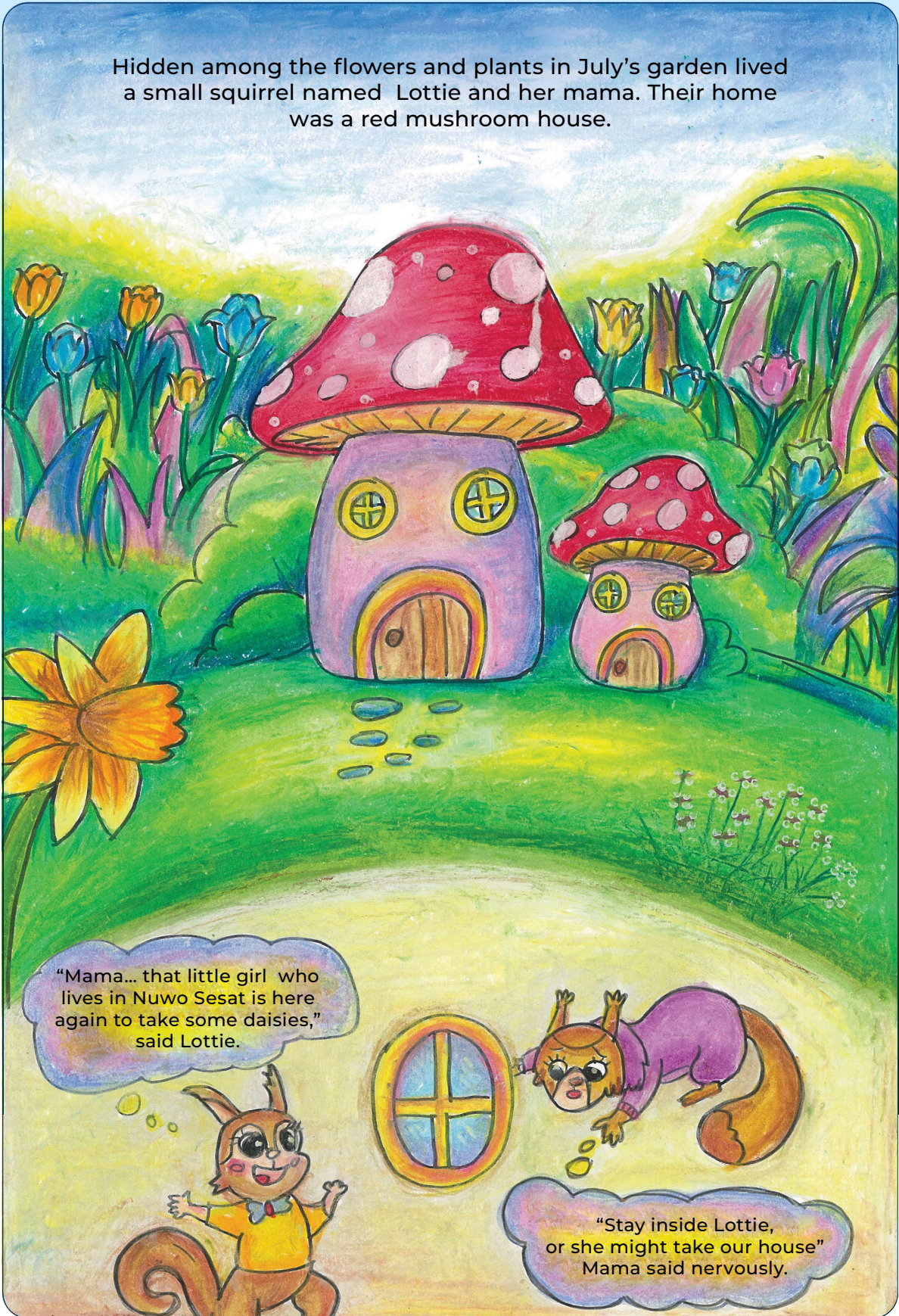
Once upon a time, there was a little girl named July who lived in a stilt house called Nuwo Sesat.

Every morning, July walked near her garden and picked a few daisy flowers growing around the house.





Hidden among the flowers and plants in July's garden lived a small squirrel named Lottie and her mama. Their home was a red mushroom house.



The dry season came.
The ground grew hard,
and the mushrooms
began to rot.

“Oh no... our home is getting sick.
The garden has become so hot and dry.
We have no water left, and maybe this
place no longer wants us”
Mama whispered as she cried.



One day, July smelled something strange and looked at her garden.

"Oh no... the garden is drying up. And, wait, what is that?! Is that a squirrel?" July said in shock.

Lottie and her mom froze. Then she quickly hid under the Nuwo Sesat. "Please don't take our home!" she cried.



July stepped back, surprised.

"I didn't know I thought no one lived here." she said softly as she looked at the rotten mushroom and the dry soil.

But mama Lottie was too scared and she said, "Please go, I know you want to take our home, leave us alone!"



The next morning, July looked at her favorite dollhouse, a present from her mama for her birthday

"Maybe... this can help," she whispered.



After that, July carefully placed the dollhouse under the Nuwo Sesat.



"You gave up your own possessions... for us? I thought you were dangerous, but you became our shelter." she said with a warm heart.

Mama Lottie slowly stepped forward.



Together, they planted new flowers under the Nuwo Sesat. The soil grew damp and Lottie and her mom watched the flowers bloom again. From that day on, they lived side by side. They shared the same space, took care of each other, and learned to trust one another. This is how their community began.







About the Author

**Aurora Sofia
Tjindarbumi**
SMAN 5 Bandar Lampung



Hello! My name is Aurora Sofia Tjindarbumi, but those close to me call me Rora. I was born in Bandar Lampung, Lampung, on December 18, 2008, and I am currently 17 years old. I am an 11th-grade student at SMA Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung. I love playing chess, dancing, and drawing. I also enjoy reading books, especially classic literature!

Beyond my hobbies, I strive to become a successful person who brings pride to my family while fulfilling my dream of exploring new places and discovering the world's diverse cultures.

About AMINEF

The American Indonesian Exchange Foundation (AMINEF) is the binational Fulbright Commission for Indonesia. AMINEF's many educational exchange programs have increased mutual understanding between the United States and Indonesia and strengthened the ties that unite our two countries.

Since 1952, more than 3,500 Indonesians and 1,400 Americans have participated in exchanges. Annually, 80-100 Indonesians travel to the US through Fulbright grants for degree study, teaching, research, or non-degree professional fellowships. Similarly, up to 60 Americans receive Fulbright support to contribute their expertise in teaching, research, or as Specialists, offering insights to Indonesian institutions.

For detailed information on degree scholarships and non-degree fellowships available to Indonesians and Americans, visit the AMINEF website at www.aminef.or.id.

About the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Program and ETA in Indonesia

The Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Program, one of the US State Department-funded Fulbright programs in many countries worldwide, places recent college graduates and young professionals as English teaching assistants in primary and secondary schools or universities overseas.

The program helps improve international students' English-language abilities and knowledge of the US while increasing the US student's language skills and knowledge of the many host countries worldwide.

In Indonesia, the Fulbright ETAs are placed in high schools (SMA, SMK, and Madrasah) that assist local English teachers. The program has been running for over two decades, since 2004, affecting thousands of Indonesian students and their communities across the archipelago. AMINEF works closely with the Indonesian Ministries of Primary and Secondary Education and Religious Affairs to administer the Fulbright ETA program in Indonesia.



AMINEF
American Indonesian
Exchange Foundation



FULBRIGHT
Indonesia

AMINEF
Intiland Tower, 11th Floor
Jl. Jend. Sudirman Kav. 32
Jakarta 10220

T. +62 21 5793 9085/86
F. +62 21 5793 9089

www.aminef.or.id

 AMINEF/Fulbright Indonesia
 fulbrightindonesia
 @FulbrightID

 AMINEFFulbrightIndonesia
 aminef_fulbrightindonesia
 infofulbright_ind@aminef.or.id